

Facts about sex work & violence in Zimbabwe.



SEX WORKERS IN ZIMBABWE FACE UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF VIOLENCE, STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. IT PUTS THEM IN SITUATIONS THAT MAKE THEM CONSIDERABLY MORE VULNERABLE TO HIV/AIDS. SUPPORTIVE LAWS AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES, CARE AND SUPPORT ARE NEEDED TO SECURE THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF SEX WORKERS.

What the law says:

While it is officially not a crime to sell sex, it is illegal to solicit clients, live on the earnings of sex work and to facilitate and procure sex work.



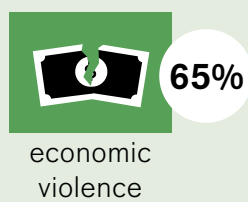
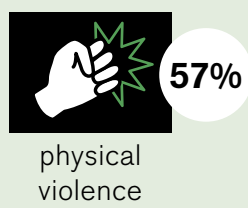
Criminalisation:

Sex workers who operate in settings where prostitution is criminalised face increased risk of violence, police abuse and lack of access to health care and the justice system.

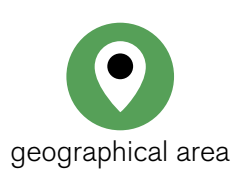
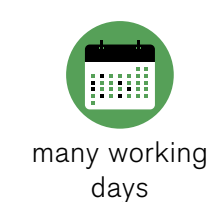


63% of the sex workers in Zimbabwe experienced violence in the past year

Sorts of violence

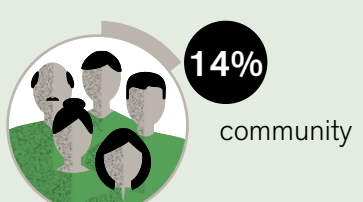
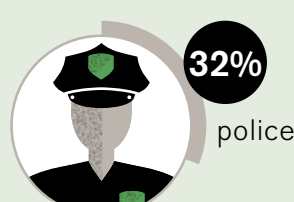
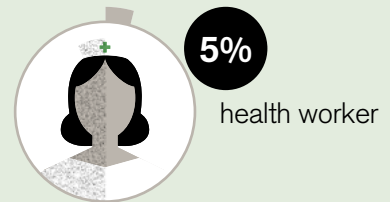
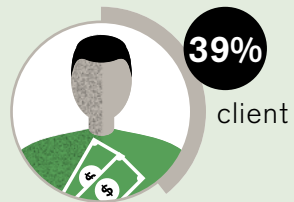


Risk factors



"I got a client and we were in the alleyway. When the police came up I took the condom and threw it away. They still arrested us and took pictures of the both of us. They threatened to sell those pictures in the B-Metro for \$30."

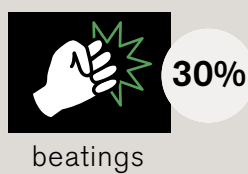
Who are the perpetrators?



"A client took me to his home. Having agreed on a price, he afterwards beat me up and took his money back."

61% of the sex workers experienced violence by the police in the past year upon arrest

What type of violence are we talking about?



Hard facts

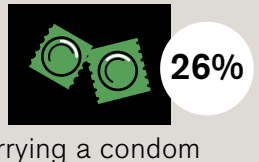
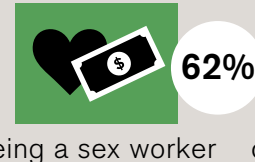
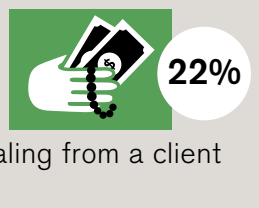
To prevent arrest, 27% of the sex workers had sex with a police officer and 58% paid bribes to the police.



Arrest

58% of the sex workers were arrested last year. On average they were arrested twelve times and most of them were detained for 12 hours per arrest.

Why were they arrested?



Filing a case

30% of the sex workers filed an incident with the police. Only 20% of the cases were investigated by the police.

"The point is if you are a sex worker and don't have any friends who are police officer, it means you can't get justice."

17% of the HIV-positive sex workers does not have regular access to treatment

HIV prevalence

40% is HIV negative



45% is HIV positive

7% does not want to disclose status

8% has never been tested

At the clinic



27%

of the sex workers has been yelled at and/or stigmatised by a health worker in the past twelve months.

Access to regular HIV medication

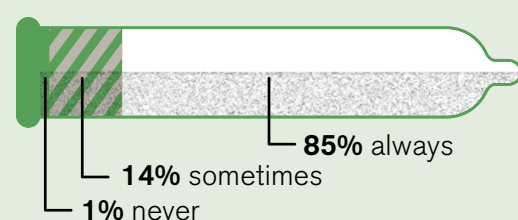
Of those who indicated to be HIV positive:

83% receives regular treatment



17% gets no regular treatment

Condom use while selling sex:



"Nurses, especially the young ones, are rough. When they know that you are a sex worker they do not treat you with dignity or respect. Some even refuse to treat us because of the work that we do."

Recommendations:

- 1 Decriminalise sex work
- 2 Strengthen sex worker movements to protect and defend sex workers' rights
- 3 Raise awareness of the legal rights of sex workers

Hands Off! Reduction of violence against sex workers

The Hands Off! programme, coordinated by Aids Fonds, focuses on the reduction of violence against sex workers in Southern Africa through prevention, care and support. The programme works with sex worker-led groups, law enforcement, health and support services, legal centres and NGOs working on human rights.

The Sexual Rights Centre

The Sexual Rights Centre (SRC) is a non-profit grassroots organization that works to advance the sexual rights of marginalized women, children and men. SRC works closely with sex worker-led group Pow Wow.

Read the full report or more about Hands Off! at www.aidsfonds.nl/handsoff

